

there could not have accessed my medical records or known what medications I am on; and I happen to be on several heart medications.

This is a recipe for disaster, and to fix this crucial shortcoming I have introduced legislation to increase tax breaks for physicians who invest in the new technology of electronic medical records. Physicians are more likely to adopt this new technology if our Tax Code helps offset the substantial, and they can be substantial, initial costs.

We have seen the success of this tactic with other tax relief for small businesses. H.R. 4641, the Adopt HIT Act, will help our doctors save money, time and, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, save lives.

Reforming health care will make coverage more affordable and accessible for both workers and employers, especially our small businessmen and women. But affordable health care is only half of the equation. After all, the most affordable health care in the world is, Mr. Speaker, irrelevant if a patient cannot get in to see a doctor when he is sick or visit the emergency room when he is injured.

As a practicing physician for nearly 30 years, I have seen the results of our troubled medical tort system firsthand. In many communities, hospitals have closed, women have to travel across State lines for prenatal care, emergency rooms lack the on-call specialists they need to save lives. This should not happen in America, home to the greatest physicians in the world.

I call on my colleagues to join me in the effort to create a consumer-driven system of care for our country.

HONORING MORGAN PARK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, today I want to tell this Congress and this Nation about a high school success story. Today I would like to acknowledge students and teachers from the Morgan Park High School located in my district, the first congressional district on the south side of the City of Chicago.

Morgan Park High School students posted world-class advanced placements test scores. Mr. Speaker, it must be noted, particularly as this is the month that we celebrate black history, February, it must be noted that out of the more than 15,000 high schools and 31 countries worldwide, more students at Morgan Park High School passed their AP exams in two courses, English language composition and European history, than at any other high school in the Nation or in the world.

□ 1930

The vast majority of these students were African American. The number of African-American students passing these college-level exams at Morgan

Park High School is even more amazing considering the fact that African Americans are the most underrepresented racial group in the country in AP classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to the excellent teaching and tutelage of their teachers, Ms. Judith Keyhoe, Ms. Marilyn Jackson and Mr. Martin Luzzo, all of the Morgan Park students deserve special recognition and congratulations from this Congress today.

Morgan Park High School is a great example of what dedicated administrators, committed teachers, motivated students, and involved parents can accomplish; and I ask all my colleagues to please join me in congratulating Morgan Park High School, this fine school, for their wonderful academic achievement.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to just take a moment to name the individual students that allowed Morgan Park High School to soar to these unprecedented heights. These students are: Jorge Anguiano, Jenele Anderson, Desney Avery, Nicole Banks, Brian Belcher, Aryelle Berry, Evan Beverly, Jasmine Bomer, Justin Booz, Christina Boyce, Jenise Chappell, Monique Childress, Angelo Dasilva, Eric Dorsey, Natalie Dowdell, Patrice Gardner, Jeffrey Gonzales, Brandon Hamilton, Zellonda Harris, Rachel Hoffman, Dominique Jones, Edward King, Latasha Kinnard, Juwaun McClain, Amanda Moore, Tichina Moore, Eduardo Morales, Jeffrey Nelson, Cecilia Ortiz, Kimberly Randle, Ashley Rouse, Lajoi Royston, Renata Sago, Bradley Thomas, Jerome Wade, Langston Wesley, Alexandria Willis, Rachel Woods, Joshua Young.

To the students at Morgan Park High School, we take our hats off to you. Keep up the good work. Make sure that you keep on the path to success. This Congress, this Nation, is very proud of you. God bless you.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARCHANT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. SOLIS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. HERSETH addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WYNN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STUPAK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. DELAURO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, what a great pleasure it is to come and speak to the House tonight about a number of different topics. I want to thank the leadership and the conference for giving me the opportunity to lead an hour here and talk about things that are of utmost importance to our citizens all across this Nation.

When I have talked with some of my constituents, many of my constituents at home, over and over and over again I hear them say, what is going on up there in Washington, why has the discussion, the personal animosity that seems to be brought to so many of our debates, why is that occurring? It is a great question because it does a disservice to us all; it really does.

What we are beginning tonight is what we are calling the Official Truth Squad. This is our new logo of the Official Truth Squad, and we thought that was appropriate because there are so many times that you hear on the floor inaccuracies here, and so we thought it was appropriate to put together a group of folks that would come as often as needed to bring some truth.

To start that truth, I just wanted to set kind of the premise of why people are so disgusted, what kinds of things that are being said that make people so doggone disgusted with some of the language that is going on up here in Washington.

These are real quotes; and I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that people

hear these things because, again, it does a disservice to the whole debate. These are quotes from Howard Dean, who is the chairman of the Democratic party. This is a quote just a year ago: "I hate Republicans and everything they stand for." Can you imagine that? What an awful thing to say to at least a third of the Nation, if not more, to individuals who voted in the last general election for President, over half of the individuals that voted, and that kind of tenor is just wrong. It is just wrong. It does not help anything.

Just 6 months ago or so, he said: "Republicans, a lot of them haven't made an honest living in their lives." What kind of nonsense is that? What kind of disservice does that do to our Nation?

We have heard some of that same kind of tone here on the House floor, and so we endeavored to put together a group that would talk about the truth, talk about real things, and try to bring some real information to our citizens all across this Nation.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, I do not have the exact quote, but he said something like, everyone is entitled to their own opinion but they are not entitled to their own facts; everyone's entitled to their own opinion but not their own facts. So we thought we would bring some facts, and we will do that over this next hour and over the next number of days as we come and talk with folks.

This Official Truth Squad grew out of the freshman class group of 24 or 25 of us who get together on a frequent basis, and we thought it was an appropriate thing to do to counter what has come to be known as the culture of cynicism, the culture of pessimism and the culture of negativity that we often-times hear from the other side. So we hope to bring a much more positive outlook, a much more positive view, frankly, of our Nation and to bring some facts to the table that I think and we think are appropriate just so people have the right kind of information out there to make decisions, to figure out what their government is doing and what it is not doing and what it ought to be doing.

With that, I am pleased to be joined by my colleagues, and first to come talk to you about some things as it relates to the economy and the budget is the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX). She is a member of the freshman class. I have come to know and respect her so highly. She has a background in education and is just as principled as they come and as frankly positive as one could be about the outlook for our Nation. So the gentlewoman is going to spend a few moments and talk with you about the economy and the budget.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) very much for inaugurating the Truth Squad here tonight. I think it is high time that many of us came here to the well and shared the truth against many of the negative things that have been

said night after night after night on this floor.

I am very positive about our country. It is the greatest country in the world, and it is the only place I know of where people are dying to get into. We need to make sure that the positive things about this country are talked about.

I want to talk a little bit tonight about the important role this Congress is going to continue to play in balancing our budget by spending our constituents' money wisely and by putting our national priorities in order. I also am looking forward to exposing this hypocrisy that has been exhibited here night after night by people who are quick to lament our Nation's problems but unwilling to take positive action towards solutions.

The Congress must become a better steward of the taxpayers' dollars, and we must do it now. Our constituents deserve to send less of their hard-earned dollars to Washington and spend more on their families, businesses, and dreams. By cutting spending and cutting taxes, we will allow citizens to have more time with their families because they will not be having to work so much. Our constituents meticulously budget their dollars at their kitchen tables, and we owe it to them to do the same thing here in Washington. It is their dollars we spend, not ours.

Cutting Federal spending is not an easy thing to do. We have seen this even as freshmen. However, it is the right thing to do, and my colleagues who join me here tonight recognize this important distinction and important responsibility to do what is right over what is easy.

We had the chance recently to slow the growth of Federal spending, and I am proud that this House did the right thing by passing the Deficit Reduction Act. However, those very same Democrats who come here night after night and complain about the deficit were unwilling to roll up their sleeves and get to work to actually solve the problem. They had their chance to contribute to a solution with the Deficit Reduction Act, but they took the easy way out by voting against the bill. The Deficit Reduction Act is one of the long-term solutions for the future that we are supporting.

It is easy to hand out money willy-nilly. However, it is not easy to find areas to reduce chronic spending; but reduce Federal spending we must, and we must demand more accountability for that spending.

My constituents work hard, and more of them are working than ever before. More people are working all over this country than ever before. They have adapted to our changing economy; and as a result of sound economic policy, more of them are in good jobs than ever before. We have reduced the tax burden on American workers and small businesses, and our economy is strong.

The money coming into the Federal Government has increased dramati-

cally; but, unfortunately, the money we spend has increased dramatically, also. It is the taxpayers' money we spend; and we must be responsible, meticulous, frugal and effective in the ways the Federal Government spends this money.

As this Congress takes up the fiscal year 2007 budget, I hope my colleagues will maintain that mentality. We have made great progress with the Deficit Reduction Act, but we must do much more to transition from deficit reduction to deficit elimination.

I also call on the Democrats to contribute to the solution and to do the right thing by finding commonsense ways to reduce Federal spending. While we are here tonight to expose some blatant hypocrisy by the quick-to-complain Democrats, I would also like to invite them to start doing the right thing. I would love to see some Democrats join us in calling for reduced spending. I would love to see them back it up with a vote for reduced spending. It is not the easy thing to do, but it is the right thing to do.

□ 1945

It is unfair to leave our children and grandchildren with massive debts resulting from overspending. The President's budget is a further attempt to help spare younger generations from debts that they do not deserve, but we must keep making progress with what the President outlined.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues for joining me tonight in highlighting this important issue. I am really proud to be a part of the Truth Squad, made up only of House Republicans; and I would like to reiterate my hope that Democrats will join us in doing the right thing, however difficult, by slowing Federal spending. I look forward to working with them to restore fiscal accountability and restraint so we can continue to trim and soon eliminate the Federal deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. PRICE for hosting this hour, and I am looking forward to many more evenings of our presenting to the American people the facts about our economy.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman's participation and involvement. It brings light to the appropriate problem and the appropriate solution. The problem is too much spending. The problem that we have here in Washington is too much spending, which means the appropriate solution is to decrease that spending. The Deficit Reduction Act was a move in the right direction, to decrease spending by \$40 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I know it is hard to believe, but we did not get a single vote from anybody on the other side of the aisle for something that is a move in the right direction. Was it as much as we would like? Certainly not. But without any help from the other side, things get much more difficult. We appreciate the gentlewoman bringing us the truth as it surrounds the budget.

I am pleased now to yield to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) who, although not a member of the freshman class, we have adopted because she brings such clarity of thought to the issues. She has presented the optimistic and positive view of our Nation and the hard work we are doing to move our Nation forward. I am pleased she is able to join us tonight and talk a little bit about the budget.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia, and kudos to Mr. PRICE and the other freshmen class members for starting the Truth Squad. I know that each and every one of you are going to do a great job as you take issue by issue that comes before this body, issues that are so important to the American people because we want to be certain that we do a few things while we are here, that we are good stewards of the taxpayers' money, that we are diligent in preserving freedom because we know that our children and our grandchildren deserve the opportunity to have the ability to dream big dreams and, as we said last night, to grow up in a safe, free and secure world. We want that for them, and we want that for every American citizen.

Certainly being certain that we focus on our economic security is important. As I said, last night we talked about national security and that importance, that we have that free, safe world. Tonight we will be looking at economic security. Congresswoman Foxx always speaks so well, and I loved what she was saying about the spending habits of Washington.

Mr. Speaker, some of my constituents remind me regularly that Washington does not have a revenue problem, Washington has a spending problem. This great big bureaucracy that is built up around Washington has a tendency to eat up those tax dollars that come from the local communities in Washington and somehow never get back out there to the programs.

I think one thing we all would agree on is that Washington is never going to get enough of your money. It is never going to get enough of your money. It has an endless appetite for your money. Certainly Ronald Reagan's statement that there is nothing so close to eternal life on earth as a Federal Government program, we see that borne out every single day. We as conservatives keep focusing on that spending problem. We keep focusing on ways to reduce Federal spending.

Certainly we have made some inroads. The gentleman mentioned the Deficit Reduction Act which was and is a plan that is going to yield a savings for the American people. In this, we saw the 1 percent reduction. How we pushed to get those bills in there. Last year, we had bills, and the gentleman from Georgia joined me in sponsoring those bills for 1, 2 and 5 percent across-the-board reductions so that we would begin to prioritize.

That is what the American people want us to do, to prioritize, to make decisions about where is the best way, the very best way for this government to function so that it is continuing to provide the services and the infrastructure that we need to be the greatest Nation in the world. That is what they want to see from us. We were so pleased to see those reductions included in that Deficit Reduction Act. Yes, indeed, we are going to be working to be certain that we do that again this year.

One of the good things about the Truth Squad and what you all are going to do over the next many months is to bring forward ideas, to bring forward ideas. How do we make this government more efficient, how do we make it more effective, how are we certain that we are prioritizing and meeting the needs and desires of the American people, and how do we hold the Federal Government accountable for the dollars that they are going to spend. Because it is not government's money, it is the taxpayers' money.

I know that Representative CONAWAY is going to speak in a few more moments. I hope he is going to talk about the Federal Programs Offset Reduction Act that he introduced today. I am co-sponsoring that bill. That is the type of innovative idea that we need to see brought forward. If you are going to propose a new program, then, by golly, get in this budget and find something that is duplicative, that has outlived its usefulness, that is wasteful and eliminate it. If you are going to do something new, take away something that is not working.

As I have co-chaired the Task Force on Waste, Fraud and Abuse, that has been one of the creative suggestions and one of the recommendations, programs like that that we are looking for. We are looking forward to supporting Mr. CONAWAY in that work because we know it is our responsibility to be a good steward. We know that it is our responsibility to keep in mind that Washington is never going to get enough of the taxpayers' money, and we know that it is our responsibility to remember that Washington does not have a revenue problem. It gets plenty of money. Washington has a spending problem.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for coming and providing great light for some of the principles that we ought to be holding dear here.

One, we ought to be good stewards of the taxpayers' money. We oftentimes see Washington just spending too dog-gone much money. People know that. They understand and appreciate that.

They also understand that Republicans are the team that has the ideas, as Mrs. BLACKBURN said, to decrease spending. She has provided great leadership in providing a bill that would reduce spending across the board at the Federal level by 1, 2 and 5 percent each. So take your pick. Where do you feel

comfortable? I, frankly, would support as much as we can do. I know she would as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY), another member of the freshman class of the 109th Congress, a Member I have come to respect very highly for so many things but especially for his financial acumen. He is a CPA in his real job, his real life, and he has brought great interest and enthusiasm to the challenges we have in the economy and in the budget. He sits on the Budget Committee. I am pleased to have him join us to talk about the budget and where we are headed in the future.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for not only those kind words but also for creating the Truth Squad and being the motivating factor behind that. I think it is going to do us good to come here from time to time to talk about these things.

I also want to thank my colleague from Tennessee for those very kind words. The bill the gentlewoman is talking about would actually be a change in the House rules for next session, the 110th Congress, and that is if you can find something that the Federal Government is not already currently doing, in order to convince us that new program should come into existence, you have to do away with an existing program of equal or greater spending.

In other words, if your new program is not more important than some other program in the vast array of public programs, basically you are telling us this new proposed program is the least important thing that our Federal Government can do. If that is the case, obviously why would we do it?

Now the great thing about being freshmen, except for Mrs. BLACKBURN, is that we do not know what we are not supposed to suggest and we do not know what, quote/unquote, cannot be done. I know this is going to cross jurisdictional lines within committees, and some would say that it puts a damper on the creative spirit that brings these new programs to life. In the short run, maybe that is not a bad idea. Nancy Reagan had it right when she said just say no to drugs. Maybe we should say just say no to new programs for a little cooling off period and get an evaluation.

The President in his budget came up with 141 programs that through the evaluation process, an objective evaluation process, that could be targets for this program.

What I would like to talk about tonight is the reason why the discussions we are having tonight are so important and try to add a little sense of urgency to the overall issue of the budget for 2007. That is the long-term look, the 50-year look at the growth in the Federal Government, growth in Federal spending.

I would argue with just about anybody that the single biggest threat to

our way of life is the growth in Federal spending over the next 50 years. Now I say that with a recognition that we are at war, the global war on terror is important and it is a crisis that we ought to have to deal with, but I think spending of the Federal Government will ruin the American way of life.

If you look at studies done by the Congressional Budget Office, they have recently posted one to their Website, CBO.gov. If you look at that long-term study in the growth in Federal spending, it will frighten you or it should frighten you and add a sense of urgency to the need for what we are doing here and what we are discussing here tonight, and that is to try to trim back the rate of growth in this government.

Today, we spend an equivalent amount of 20 percent of our gross domestic product. It is consumed by the Federal Government. That \$2.7 trillion, in round numbers, that we will approve for the 2007 budget is about 20 percent of GDP. Our current tax revenues, all revenues for the Federal Government, are about 18 percent. So we are creating a deficit that we all have to deal with and decry. Nobody defends the deficit and nobody thinks it is the best way to go, but being an accountant and a CPA, those are the facts. As the photographer said, if you want a prettier picture, you need to bring me a prettier face.

But let us look at that spending out over 45 years. In the year 2050, if you look at the CBO report, the Federal Government will consume about 50 percent of gross domestic product. My colleague from Atlanta knows the world has never seen a free market enterprise country where the central government can consume half the GDP and the rest of the country prosper on the other half. It just does not work that way.

So we have two choices as I see it. One, reduce the rate of growth and reduce the programs that are not sustainable and bring the projected growth in Federal Government in line with what tax revenues can be. Or out of whole cloth, come up with a brand new economic system, a brand new way of doing business that will allow the central government to consume half, and the rest of us prosper and grow and have a better standard of living on the other half.

Today, we had hearings in the Budget Committee. We had General David Walker, the head of the Government Accountability Office; we had Douglas Holtz-Eakin, who was the immediate past chair or the director of the Congressional Budget Office; and we had Elizabeth Sawhill from the Brookings Institute, three individuals with impeccable credentials in this area. They bring a great deal of credibility to the table.

Today in the hearings they were unanimous in the problem we are talking about, in their agreement with the problem we are talking.

Now GAO's estimate is about 40 percent of GDP by 2050, and the Congress-

sional Budget Office is about 50 percent. There is a margin of error there that is irrelevant when you look at revenues. The question was asked, can we grow our way out of this problem? And the short answer was eloquent in its brevity. All three simply said, no, we cannot grow our way out of it.

□ 2000

We cannot grow our way out of it, an elegance to that answer that was deafening in the room. So we cannot grow our way out of it.

It requires us to begin to make choices today that are easier than the choices available to us next year, and are clearly easier today than any choice we will have 3 years from now regarding how we will begin to reduce the rate of growth in this Federal Government.

As I have said, in this Chamber we give speeches, and with hyperbole we typically overreach and puff and brag in order to convince our colleagues that our particular argument is correct.

But a threat to our way of life, the threat to my grandchildren, your grandchildren, is there. It is imminent when you look at the long term. The bad news about it is it is not imminent in the sense that it is going to happen tomorrow afternoon.

We as Americans just tend to deal with today's issue, tomorrow's issue, maybe next week's issue; but we rarely want to take a look at 45 years down the road and make some hard choices that we have today. Let me finish up with one quick anecdote about the importance of doing this.

I have six wonderful grandchildren that I am incredibly proud of. When I talk in the district to town hall meetings and groups like this, I typically ask all the grandparents to raise their hands. You get a good smattering of those folks.

I say, which grandparent in the room today would take their grandchildren to their local bank and say, Mr. Local Banker, I want to borrow every dollar in this bank, but I want my grandchildren to sign the note. I want them to be responsible for paying it off. I am going to take the money, and I am going to spend it on a few good things, but I want to spend it the way I see fit. But I want you to look at my grandchildren and make them pay off that debt.

There is not a grandparent in the room that says yes. There is not a grandparent anywhere that I know of who would take that. Then I look at them and say that is exactly what we are doing as a group. Our collective conduct is doing just that. By 2050, we will have an economic model that cannot be sustained, and the size of the Federal Government cannot be supported by any level of taxation that would make sense.

In an attempt to add some sense of urgency to the importance of what our colleagues, you and our other col-

leagues, are talking about tonight with respect to this year's budget and next year's budget and next year's spending, the long look is important. As I said to start with, I believe that this is the single biggest threat to our way of life that we face, that is, acknowledging the fact that we are at war with some pretty terrible people.

Dr. Price, I appreciate you allowing me to speak with the group tonight. I appreciate you allowing me this time, and thank you for your leadership in this Truth Squad effort as we go forward in the second session of the 109th Congress.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Thank you so much, Congressman CONAWAY, for your clarity. Clarity of thought is not often seen here in Washington. You have just laid out for us, really, a pretty foreboding picture that in a relatively short period of time, less than one lifetime, the government, if not changed, will spend 45, 50 percent of the GDP on government, on government programs. That just cannot be done, as you say.

The positive thing that you mention is we can solve it. We can solve it if we all knuckle down and get to work together, which I think is the uplifting message that we need to give to the American people, because it can be solved. We just have to do it together and do it positively.

Thank you so much for coming and joining us this evening.

We are joined now by THELMA DRAKE, Congresswoman DRAKE, who is another member of the freshman class and another member of the Official Truth Squad who oftentimes comes to the floor and just provides great insight into so many different areas. She is a Representative from Virginia, has owned a small business, understands what it means to sign the front side of a paycheck, and has great insight into the economy and the budget itself. I want to thank you so much for joining us tonight.

She is going to talk a little bit more about the budget.

Mrs. DRAKE. Thank you, Congressman PRICE. I want to thank you for this effort, because this is a big effort to bring people together to come and talk about America. I really chuckled when I heard Congresswoman BLACKBURN talk about Ronald Reagan's quote, that no program has eternal life like a Federal program.

You will remember, in the President's budget last year, in our very first year as freshmen here, that he did propose cuts in programs, and he has proposed cuts in programs this year.

The theory behind that is there is no way to end programs without making very, very hard choices. But I do admire that the President and this Congress are willing to look at does a program work, what are the results, and how could that money be used if it were used somewhere else. There are two things that I hear back home, and one is, when are you going to balance the budget, and when are you going to control spending?

But then, of course, if a program is cut, the next thing I hear is, why was that program cut? Of course, you and I understand, when we say cut, now, with these programs, we are talking about cutting. But usually when someone says something was cut, they usually mean it is a reduction in the growth of spending. I think that is clear that we need to talk about that so the public does not believe that there has actually been a reduction.

With my staff, I look at them and say, don't tell me percentages; give me the dollar amount for last year, the dollar amount for this year, and then we can stop talking about cuts. Medicaid. We have heard from constituents at home who say I want to talk to you about cuts in Medicaid. I say, do you mean the 7 percent growth as opposed to the 7.4 percent growth that was projected before?

But last year as a freshman, when people would come to me, and they would say the President has cut my program, I would explain the President's philosophy, which was, let's look for programs that work, let's look for programs that don't.

So I would say, maybe the President has made a mistake, and maybe his information is wrong. If you would like to come back to me with the good information, we will take it to the President.

Not one person ever came back.

I learned as a child in school that taxes are what we pay for civilization. We as Americans all believe in that. We know that we have a responsibility to Americans who are less fortunate. We have the grave responsibility of defending this Nation, of educating our children, that we have huge responsibilities on us. But one of the greatest responsibilities, I think, is to ensure that every dollar we spend of taxpayer money is spent wisely.

But what I was really thinking about, when I came over here tonight, because I came over here tonight to talk about how great our Nation is, as I came to the floor, one of the things I thought was how quickly we as Americans have recovered since the very devastating attacks of 9/11.

We gathered our strength and our resolve and, through the courage of our fighting men and women, have taken the battle to the terrorists who despise our love of freedom and our open society. We have risen as a beacon of hope to those who live in the Middle East and yearn for the freedoms that we have.

Perhaps the most important thing about Americans and what we have been attacked for, and please believe me, the targets that they took were not chosen at random, when the terrorists attacked the Twin Towers on 9/11, they did that because they are important symbols to our commitment to capitalism and to free and open markets. They struck us at our core. What they intended to injure was our spirit.

It was here that they failed, because they underestimated the strength of

the American people. The American people know that while bricks and mortar can be torn down, that our resolve and commitment to the principles that define us cannot be harassed.

We have weathered a very difficult recession. We have weathered the attacks of 9/11. We have experienced the burst of the telecom bubble; and now we find ourselves, once again, in an economy that is exploding with growth and opportunity.

Today our economy is experiencing significant growth. Since the second quarter of 2003, we have experienced an average of 3.8 percent quarterly gross domestic product growth. Nearly 4.7 million new jobs have been created since that time, and today's unemployment rate is at 4.7 percent. That is lower on average than the seventies, eighties and nineties. 2.1 million jobs have been created in the past year, and 193,000 were created in the past month alone.

Congressman PRICE, I would say that tells a very important story about our Nation. Real after-tax income has grown by 7 percent since 2001. The average hourly wage is up 3.3 percent over the past 12 months, the largest 12-month increase in just under 3 years. Inflation remains low. Consumer confidence is at a 3-year high, and homeownership is at an all-time high. Tax revenues for fiscal year 2005 grew by 14.6 percent over fiscal year 2004. That has resulted in a \$120 billion reduction in the deficit.

This is a perfect example that there is such a thing as taxpayer behavior, that when you allow people to keep their own money, they create jobs, they save it, they invest it, they spend it, they grow our economy. I believe, and I know that you believe, that our tax policy must support our economy, and it must grow our revenues.

Congress is currently in the process of renewing aspects of the legislation, the tax cuts, that have brought a lot of this economic growth about.

But today is not a day to rest on our laurels. Leadership is about creating a vision of where we want to go and how we want to get there. It is not enough to create a favorable climate for economic growth. This majority has a clear vision of how we can help Americans succeed in this climate.

You and I both serve on the House Education and Workforce Committee. We both know how hard our committee has worked to provide greater educational opportunities for Americans from all backgrounds, as well as to provide assistance for prospective employees to receive the skills and training they need to be competitive in today's workforce. You and I know the committee will continue to work hard this year.

I also think it is important, as I close, to just talk about who in America pays taxes. One of the things that we have heard over and over again is that the tax cuts are for the top 1 per-

cent of America. Americans do not realize that 50 percent of our people pay over 96 percent of the taxes. The top 50 percent pay 96.5 percent of our taxes.

That means the bottom 50 percent wage earners pay 3.5 percent of our taxes. Forty-four million Americans are estimated to owe zero Federal taxes this year and will receive a dollar-for-dollar rebate for their withholding tax, thanks to the 10 percent bracket that was created.

I think it is the least-told story of the year, how great our economy has done, the success of the tax policies. I think it is a story America needs to hear, and I thank you for giving us the opportunity to stand and talk about America, how great our Nation is, how wonderfully our economy is growing, and that we are committed to the policies that will continue that growth, continue to improve the lifestyles of all Americans.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. What a wonderful vision you have created and the great story that you have told about the recovery after 9/11 and the incredible economy that we have going in America right now.

Often at home, people do not understand that. They aren't getting told that, certainly not on the nightly news and not in the newspaper. Thank you so very, very much for joining us.

I also want to just highlight what Representative DRAKE said about the words that are used here in Washington. So often you hear about cutting this and cutting that. In fact, things are not being cut. We will talk a little bit more about that in just a minute.

Oftentimes, things are just decreasing the rate of increase, which is a little different way to say it, but it has been said that Washington is the only place where a decrease in the amount of growth that was projected is considered a cut. We just have to suffer with that.

That is why we are joining you tonight as the Official Truth Squad, to bring some real facts, some truth to the issue of the economy. I wanted to expand a little bit on what I hear at home when people talk about the kind of news that they see on television or the kind of things that they most often read in the paper.

□ 2015

They want to know why are they not hearing these good things about America.

To highlight once again some of the statistics about our economy, 17 straight quarters of growth, 17 straight quarters of growth. The home ownership rate in our Nation now is at an all-time high. Nearly 70 percent of Americans own their own home, 70 percent. What an incredible story that is, and it cuts across all demographic lines and all sectors of our society. And that is positive. That is a positive thing, that is a good thing, and it is the result of the economic policies that have been put in place here in this Congress.

Unemployment rate: 4.7 percent. Four point seven percent. And most economists will tell you that 5 percent unemployment is full employment because we have got people looking for jobs or looking to change their job or moving, those kinds of things. Five percent is full employment. Right now, our unemployment rate is 4.7 percent. Four point seven million new jobs in the last 5 years. Good news. Great news. It really is.

And because you occasionally get that, this is today's Wall Street Journal. The other side likes to talk about their third-party validators. Here is a third-party validator, a Wall Street Journal, front page story today: "Retail Sales surge 2.3 percent, Underlining Economy's Health. A 2.3 percent increase in sales. That just shows the kind of wonderful and good economy that we have got going. So we have got a plan. We have got a plan to continue to increase the wonderful performance of this economy."

I wanted to talk a little bit more about some truthful aspects that ought to be discussed, and Representative DRAKE talked about this, this chart here, again trying to bring some truth to the issue of who pays taxes. Oftentimes, we hear that the wealthy do not pay any taxes in this Nation at all and they have all sorts of ways to get around paying taxes. And this graph is so telling because oftentimes we hear, Mr. Speaker, that a picture is worth a thousand words, and this picture is.

We have got six bars here. The first bar here is the top 1 percent of wage earners in this Nation, and then, on this ordinate here, we have got the percent of taxes that they pay. Out of 100 percent of taxes here in America, what percent did the top 1 percent of wage earners pay? Thirty-four point two seven percent. Over a third of the taxes in this Nation paid by the top 1 percent wage earners. And if you go on down, the top 5 percent pay over 50 percent of the taxes in this Nation.

These numbers are not my numbers. These are official numbers, and it just is really telling.

When we look down at that fifth bar, the largest bar there, that is the top percent, 50 percent of wage earners. That is half of the wage earners in this Nation. And the top 50 percent, as Congresswoman DRAKE said, pay 96.54 percent of the taxes. The bottom 50 percent of wage earners pay less than 4 percent.

So when you hear that the wealthy in this Nation are not paying their fair share, I do not know about you, but I would say that this distribution is not unfair to those at the lower end of our scale, and it ought not be. But this is the truth. This is the truth. When you hear those other lines and you hear those other statements, you just know that it is not the truth.

This chart here talks about the revenue growth that we have had. This is the amount of money coming into the Federal Government. And you have

heard it said oftentimes that in Washington we do not have a revenue problem, we have got a spending problem. And, indeed, we do. Washington spends too much of the hard-working taxpayers' money. But I think this chart is telling. Because what this shows from the year 2000, and it is projected out to the year 2011, there is a dip here at about 2002, 2003 in revenue coming into the Federal Government. And currently in 2006, the amount of money that came into the Federal Government is \$2.3 trillion. A lot of money. A lot of money.

But being an individual who likes to know why things happen, I want to know why that increase occurred; and I think it is important to know that at this point at almost the lowest point of revenue over the past 5 years, 6 years in this Nation, what happened is that we decreased taxes. We decreased taxes through the President's recommendations and through the hard work of this Republican Congress, decreased taxes to all taxpayers in this Nation.

And what happens when you put more money in people's pockets? Incredibly, what happens is that there is more revenue that comes into the Federal Government because they become more productive. They spend more, but they save more, and they have greater incentive, greater incentive, frankly, to work. So the truth of the matter about revenues in this Nation is that they are up because of decreases in taxes.

Numbers do not lie. Senator Moynihan said everybody is entitled to their own opinion, but they are not entitled to their own facts. And the facts will show that, in fact, after the tax decreases what happened is an increase in revenue.

Now, oftentimes our friends on the other side of the aisle like to say, and, in fact, we have heard it here tonight and I wrote it down because I hear it so often but it is put in different ways, but we heard tonight that government assistance to education has been flat under this leadership. "Government assistance has been flat." Well, again, you are welcome to your own opinions, but you are not welcome to your own facts.

Here are the education totals: The annual growth over the last 5 years, the annual growth over the last 5 years, 2000, nearly \$40 billion in growth in education expenditures from the Federal Government. Forty billion dollars. In 2001, over \$40 billion of growth. In 2002, nearly \$50 billion in growth. And you see the other columns there: 2003, 2004, 2005, continual increases. This is not the increase from 1 year to the next. This is the absolute amount of money, new money, Federal Government money being spent on education.

So when you hear people say that the amount of money going into the education of our children and our young people has not increased or it has decreased or it has been cut or it is not growing at all or it is flat, that is sim-

ply not true. Simply not true. Again, you are welcome to your own opinions. You are not welcome to your own facts.

What about Pell grants, Pell grant funding? Pell grants are those grants that the Federal Government appropriately provides to those individuals who want to seek a higher education degree and they simply do not have the resources to be able to assist them. What has happened to Pell grants since the year 2000? Remember the sounds that you hear from the other side that these cuts have been disastrous, that you are cutting and you are slashing? In fact, the annual growth in Pell grants over the last 5 years average, average, a 10.3 percent increase per year. That does not sound like a cut to me. That does not sound like a cut to me.

So what this chart shows is significant growth year after year after year, billions of dollars over the last 6 years annually. Not a cut. Not a cut. And that is appropriate. It is appropriate that we do that, but what we are here tonight to bring to the American people, Mr. Speaker, are some facts, some truth that we would like to share with the American people.

What I would like to do this evening in my brief time remaining is to just bring a little truth and fact to where Federal Government spending occurs. Because I think it is important for the American people to know and appreciate just what their Federal Government is spending their hard-earned taxpayer money on.

This is a pie chart. It is relatively simple, and there are about six major categories of spending that the Federal Government has. And you have heard a lot about automatic spending that occurs, and those automatic areas are the area of Social Security, the area of Medicare, and 20.5 percent for things like Medicaid and pensions and the like, and then there is net interest. Then there is the discretionary side, which really is the only side that we have been able to affect to any great degree. One is defense, which is about 20 percent of the Federal budget, and the other is 19.2 percent, which covers everything else that the Federal Government does. So I think it is important to get an appreciation for where Federal Government money is going. Social Security, 21 percent right now. Medicare, 11.9 percent. Other entitlements or other automatic spending, 20.5 percent.

We were talking about the amount of spending, where the Federal Government spends its money; and the previous pie chart showed what we have right now, in 2005. Currently, the Federal Government spends 54 percent on what are called mandatory programs, and it really ought not be called mandatory. We could call it automatic. It is oftentimes called entitlements.

But in that portion of this pie chart are Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, some Federal pensions and the

like. But those are programs that have formula within them that allow them just to continue to perpetuate year after year after year. And this area of the pie chart is what Representative CONAWAY talked about. That is the area that will consume 50 percent, 50 percent of the entire gross domestic product.

Currently, this is 20 percent of the budget. This, over the next 10 years, will grow to 62 percent. As you can see, this trend, in 1995, it was 49 percent; 2005, 54 percent; 2015, 62 percent. That trend is one that we cannot sustain as a Nation. It just cannot happen, unless you do what the other side talks about repeatedly, which is to raise taxes; and, as Congressman CONAWAY talked about, in fact, you cannot even grow your way out of it. You cannot even raise taxes enough to cover that and sustain our way of life as a Nation. So I think it is incredibly important that when we are talking here on the floor of the House that we talk about real facts, real facts, honest information for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I would just like to say what a pleasure it has been to come before the American people tonight and to gather a group of what we are calling the official truth squad of primarily the freshmen class. And, Mr. Speaker, as president of the freshmen class, Representative JINDAL from Louisiana has been wonderfully supportive of these efforts to bring truth to the floor of the House. What a wonderful thing.

We live in an incredible and a great and a wonderful Nation. It is a Nation that has, through liberty and through freedom, benefited more citizens than ever known in the history of the world. We believe, on this Republican side of the aisle, that it is important that government does do some things, but we do not want government running every part of our life.

There are a couple of things the government should do well. It should defend us well. It should have a balanced budget and be able to keep the commitments that it makes. We have a clear and a positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. We believe that Washington spends too much money, too much of the taxpayers' hard-earned money, and we have a commitment to balance the budget through controlling the growth in spending.

The other side, as I mentioned, tends to be interested in doing one thing, and that is raising your taxes. There is a plan afoot right now that they have to increase and raise your taxes. It seems to be oftentimes the only solution that they have.

But, Mr. Speaker, we were sent to Washington to solve problems. Difficult problems, yes. But my colleagues and I and the official truth squad will be here many, many times over the coming months to bring reality to the discussions that we are having, to bring some truth to the discussions

that we are having, and to remember what Senator Moynihan said, and that is that you are welcome to your own opinions but you are not welcome to your own facts.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership once again so very much for the opportunity to present this hour.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 32. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide criminal penalties for trafficking in counterfeit marks.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1777. An act to provide relief for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

□ 2030

DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS INNOVATIVE AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JINDAL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I am claiming this time on behalf of myself and other colleagues who will be joining me shortly to talk about what really has made America such an economic power in the world and such a leader in both economics and in innovation, and that is in the 1960s when President Kennedy made the case to send a person to the Moon and to bring that person back safely, it was more than a moon shot. It was an expression of optimism about the talent in this country and about the resources in this country.

In the process of sending that individual to the Moon and back, we also built a great infrastructure. We built a great infrastructure that consisted of one of the great public-private partnerships in the history of the world, a partnership between our academic institutions, our research institutions, the private sector, and the U.S. Government. In putting that partnership together, we created both the physical resources to create the rocket ships and the infrastructure at NASA, and also the intellectual basis and foundation to make the discoveries necessary.

That is where America has been for the last 50 years. It has ridden out on the point of scientific discovery, of the discovery of knowledge, the acquisition of knowledge, and in the resulting innovation, in the resulting economic growth and the world leadership in those areas. It has served this country well. It has made it the richest country

in the world. It has made it the strongest country in the world because of that innovation, because of that scientific discovery.

Some of that was done through the National Science Foundations. Some of that was done through the National Institutes of Health, the National Institutes of Medicine, in conjunction with other research facilities and with the private sector.

It was very interesting as the Democrats started to consider the need for reinvestment in America's innovation infrastructure; and we thought about what would it mean at this time to push ahead for the next generation of innovation, the next generation of innovators, the next generation of manufacturing jobs in this country, the next generation of other jobs in this country and the economic growth that could continue to drive the American standard of living for America's families.

As we talked to those who had been so very successful in the world of technology and biotechnology and venture capitalists who have gone forth to try and fund these bright young people and their ideas, those people who today are the CEOs and the presidents and the founders of some of the most successful companies in the history of the world, American companies in the technology field and the biotech field, it is interesting that all of them fully understood that they were the inheritors, they were the inheritors of that public-private partnership, of that investment that was made in the scientific discovery, that investment that was made in new young mathematicians and scientists and engineers; the fact that this country decided that it was important enough for our national security, for our economic security, that we would fully pay people's way with fellowships so they could spend their full time in the quest of that new knowledge, those skills, those talents, and achieved their Ph.D.s and other advanced degrees in math, science, and engineering.

All of these people today recognize that when they were starting their companies in the garages of California, in the small business parks of New Jersey, in the small business parks and the university research labs across this country, they were the inheritors of that investment made by this Nation.

They also told us in these meetings that they felt in that public-private partnership the public side had been lagging, the public side had not been keeping up with the kind of investments that were going to be necessary if we in fact were going to have long-term, high-risk, high-reward research taking place in this country, the kind of research that does lead you to the next generation of innovation, to the next generation of jobs and economic growth and world leadership, that we need to reinvest in that.

They talked about how we doubled and this Congress made a decision on a